



Date: February 19, 2013

To: Hon. Danté Bartolomeo, Co-Chair
Hon. Larry B. Butler, Co-Chair
Members of the Housing Committee

From: Jude Carroll, Community Development Specialist, Connecticut Housing Coalition

Re: **Proposed Bills: SB 24, SB 335, SB 336, SB 337, SB 338, HB 5062, HB 5066,
and HB 5135**

Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Butler, and members of the Housing Committee. My name is Jude Carroll; I am the Community Development Specialist at the Connecticut Housing Coalition (CHC). The Coalition represents the broad, vibrant network of community-based affordable housing activity that is happening across the state. Our more than 250 member organizations include nonprofit developers, human service agencies, resident associations, and diverse other housing practitioners and advocates. Founded in 1981, the Coalition works to expand housing opportunity and to increase the quantity and quality of affordable housing in Connecticut.

The Housing Coalition is concerned about several of the bills before you today. Below is our statement for each of the proposals of interest.

SB 24 and SB 338: Acts Concerning Membership of the Interagency Council on Affordable Housing. While we feel it is in the best interest of public policy to include a wide spectrum of interests in the membership of the Interagency Council, we do not feel it is appropriate to include stakeholders who have a financial stake in state housing policy—such as mortgage lenders, banks, realtors, and for-profit and not-for-profit owners and management. In terms of housing authorities, it is appropriate to include the Connecticut Chapter of National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (CONN-NAHRO) which represents the interests of local housing authorities in the state.

SB 335: An Act Providing Incentives for Certain Connecticut Housing Finance Authority Projects. Each year, the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) carefully considers a balanced incentive system in establishing its Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP). Because it is established annually, CHFA has the ability to respond to local needs, incentivize certain types of developments, and weigh the relative benefit of one type of housing development over another. This process, which has a significant public comment component and is dictated by federal regulations, is time-tested and its priorities should not be dictated by legislation.

SB 336 and SB 337: An Act Establishing Goals for Mixed Population Public Housing. As one Housing Committee member stated at the public hearing held on February 14th, populations that need affordable housing should not be pitted against each other. If the state were in a position where there was sufficient housing choice for both senior and for people with disabilities, some limitations on percentages might be acceptable. However, once absolute percentages are established, one population or the other will be excluded from housing that is sorely needed. We oppose any efforts to place percentage limits or other “quotas” that are, in essence, preferences for one segment of the population over another.

HB 5062: An Act Concerning Urban Housing for Young Professionals. As above, we oppose legislative efforts that prioritize one type of person over another. The Connecticut Housing Coalition is well aware of the “brain drain” that has been occurring in Connecticut over the past decade. We agree that the state must make an effort to encourage young professionals to settle and raise families in Connecticut. However, according to a 2009 report released by the Connecticut Capitol Region Council of Governments, entitled *Together We Can Grow Better—Smart Growth for A Sustainable Connecticut Capitol Region*, regional planning must take into account changing demographics, market forces, and environmental challenges. Low- and moderate-income workers are also needed to revitalize our urban centers, and need access to the transportation and jobs available in the inner cities. Affordable housing should be made available to a broad spectrum of residents--that is the message of the report.

HB 5066: An Act Concerning Drug-Related Activity by Tenants in Public Housing. As currently written, the state’s existing housing statute allows housing authorities to evict a public housing tenant or member of a tenant’s household if drug use is proved. There is no need for this legislation.

HB 5135: An Act Authorizing Municipalities to Impose Impact Fees on the Development of Affordable Housing. We object to this proposal, which would impose fees only to affordable housing developments. Its adoption will have a chilling effect on any new housing development at a time when we need more, rather than less, affordable housing options.

Thank you for this opportunity.